



## VARIANCES TO STANDARDS APPLICATION

March 2, 2015

Purpose: ARM 10.55.604.1. A local board of trustees may apply to the Board of Public Education through the Superintendent of Public Instruction to implement a variance to a standard or a section of standards, excluding standards stating statutory criteria, standards pertaining to educator licensure or endorsement, and content standards as defined by the Board of Public Education and provided in guidance from the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

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### DUE DATES

- First semester implementation; March 2, 2015
- Second semester implementation; July 6, 2015

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**COUNTY:** Sanders

**DISTRICT:** #2

### LIST THE SCHOOL OR MULTIPLE SCHOOLS THAT ARE REQUESTING THE VARIANCE(S):

Thompson Falls Junior High

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1. **Is this an initial application (2 years) or a Renewal application (3 years)?**  
Initial
  2. **Is this for first semester implementation or second semester implementation?**  
First
  3. **Standard(s) for which a variance is requested, i.e., 10.55.709. If there is a program delivery standard, be sure to list it as well. For example, 10.55.1801.**  
10.55.709
  4. **Please attach evidence through official minutes of the board of trustees that local school community stakeholders were involved in the consideration and development of the proposed variance to standards. Stakeholder groups include trustees, administrators, teachers, classified school staff, parents, community members, and students as applicable.**  
Presented to board of trustees on March 2, 2015. Official minutes will be approved in April.
  5. **Please provide evidence that the board of trustees adopted its application for variance at an official, properly noticed meeting of its board of trustees.**  
Board agenda from the March 2, 2015 board meeting will be attached to request.
  6. **Describe the variance requested.**







We have an elementary school of 200 students requiring .5 FTE, a junior high with 65 students requiring .1 FTE, and a high school of 165 students requiring .5 FTE. For a total of 1.1 required FTE. We would like to serve all three schools with 1 FTE. Our district is experiencing declining enrolment and located in a rural area. Hiring a .1 certified librarian is not practical for our district therefore we request 1FTE be permitted to cover our district with the assistance of a designated para professional. Our district believes that the librarian needs of our students may be met adequately with 1 FTE certified librarian.

**7. Provide a brief statement of the mission and goals of this proposed variance.**

To create a student-centered learning environment where every student can be engaged and encouraged to increase their reading potential.

**8. List at least one specific measurable objective(s) that demonstrates that the proposed variance will meet or exceed the results under the current standard(s).**

We will increase the number of books checked out of our library by 10% during the term of the variance.

We will implement quarterly grade level collaboration meetings between teachers and the librarian to develop lessons that address the inquiry/research process.

**9. What data or evidence will be gathered to document progress toward meeting the measurable objectives?**

Our librarian will collect and report, check out data quarterly with building administration. Each school will develop a positive recognition program for growth in reading.

Grade level lesson plans that incorporate library standards including the inquiry/research process.

**10. In what way does this variance to standard meet the specific needs of the students in your school(s)?**

This variance will allow students in each of our schools to have access to a maintained library that is capable of meeting their academic needs and meets the state program delivery standards.

**11. Variance to Standard: Outline how and why the proposed variance would be:**

**a. Workable. (Sufficient district resources are available for the success of the variance.)**

Due to the close proximity between our elementary school and junior high school, we are able to schedule time for .5 FTE librarian to be shared between the two libraries. In addition routine time will be scheduled for the librarian to work in a professional learning community/team format with grade level teachers.

**b. Educationally sound. (Applicant has relied on sound research as a rationale for the variance.)**

Reading is designated as our districts top academic priority. Research supports that reading is the foundational skill for all other learning. Continuing to provide student access to library services and promote reading in our district is essential to our mission statement, *"everything revolves around learning"*.





**c. Where applicable, aligned with program standards under ARM 10.55.1101 through 10.55.1901.**

This variance will allow our district to continue to meet the library standards set forth in 10.55.1801. Working as a team our curriculum coordinator, librarian, and teachers will be able to improve our current libraries during the term of this variance.

**12. Designed to meet the content standards for this area of the curriculum (only applies to those standards which also have related curriculum content standards).**

Thompson Falls School District became a member organization of the Northwest Montana Curriculum Cooperative in 2014-15. Time will be scheduled on an ongoing basis during this variance to allow our new librarian, administrators, and teachers to review and implement the library media program standards in each of our schools. The district will support the librarian in attending professional organizational meetings and state conferences to network with professional educators in the state and continue to move our program forward.

**RENEWAL APPLICATION ONLY:** Please attach a summary of the data gathered to demonstrate that the variance cycle ending June 30, met or exceeded the standard. State the measurable objective for the initial or previous application.

**Required school district signatures:**

Board Chair Name: Sandra Muster

Board Chair Signature: Sandra Muster Date: 2 March 2015

Superintendent Name: Jason J. Slater

Superintendent Signature: Jason J. Slater Date: 2 March 2015



Montana  
Office of Public Instruction  
Denise Juneau, State Superintendent

opi.mt.gov

Mail your signed form to:

Accreditation and Educator Preparation Division  
Office of Public Instruction  
PO Box 202501  
Helena, MT 59620-2501

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**OPI USE ONLY**

Superintendent of Public Instruction:

*Denise Juneau*

Date

*5/14/15*

☒ Approve ☐ Disapprove

Board of Public Education Chair

*Sharon Carroll*

Date

*5/14/15*

☒ Approve ☐ Disapprove





**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

March 2, 2015 7:00 P.M. Conference Room (Dorm)

DRAFT

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Thompson Falls School District #2 was called to order by Chairman Sandra Muster at 7:05 p.m. with Trustees Mindi Wilson, Jennifer Strine, and Ryan Fields; Superintendent Jason Slater; Principals Glenn Garrison, Len Dorscher and Rochelle Dickson; Student Representative Shelby Lafond; District Clerk Gayle Munson, present. Visitors present as per attached list. Trustee Jeff Lundberg was absent.

Jennifer Strine made a motion, seconded by Mindi Wilson, to approve the agenda. **Unanimous.**

The minutes of February 2, 2015, were approved as presented.

There were no public comments.

Jason Slater noted that a work session on the general fund budget forecast was held prior to the meeting and summarized the information with the attached handouts.

Mr. Slater reported that some highlights for the month included the first "Science Night" held at the elementary school, MAP training was conducted for the teachers, and Dominic Meyers presented on "Native American Culture" for staff, students, and the community.

Mrs. Dickson, Mr. Garrison, and Mr. Dorscher reported on activities at their buildings. (See attached information.)

School Counselor Rob Christiansen reported on his plans for an "etiquette lunch" for junior high students and invited the board to attend.

Mr. Slater reported that a parent notification letter was sent out regarding testing and state assessments. (see attached.)

State accreditation standards currently require 1.1 FTE to meet our elementary, junior high, and high school library needs. Mr. Slater is submitting a variance to standards application in accordance with ARM 10.55.604.1 to the Board of Public Education requesting a 1FTE. (See attached form and information.) Mindi Wilson made a motion, seconded by Jennifer Strine, to apply for the variance as attached. **Unanimous.**

Ryan Fields made a motion, seconded by Jennifer Strine, to accept with regret the resignation of high school secretary, Val Hollis effective June 30, 2015. **Unanimous.** Mr. Slater noted that he plans for the application/interview process to be complete by the next board meeting so that the new secretary will have time to train with Mrs. Hollis.

Ryan Fields made a motion, seconded by Mindi Wilson, to accept the retirement letters as received from Beth Chestnut (librarian), Elaine Goertzen (5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher) and Gary Thompson (high school math teacher). They will be recognized at a retirement banquet to be held at the end of the school year. **Unanimous.**

Mr. Slater reported that Karla Padden did not accept her 2014-15 teacher contract. (See attached information.)

Mindi Wilson made a motion, seconded by Ryan Frields, to approve the renewal of the softball co-op agreement between Noxon School District #10 and Thompson Falls School District #2 for 2015-2018 as attached. **Unanimous.**

Jennifer Strine made a motion, seconded by Mindi Wilson, to approve Kati McCaslin as the assistant high school softball coach for the 2014-15 school year. **Unanimous.**

Jennifer Strine made a motion, seconded by Ryan Frields, to approve Kyla Molzahn as a volunteer assistant softball coach for the 2014-15 school year. **Unanimous.**

The Board was provided with the "Head Coach Performance Evaluation" document. (See attached.) Athletic Director Chadd Laws explained the evaluation process and noted that they would continue to make adjustments thru the end of the year before formally using the document for next year.

Jennifer Strine made a motion, seconded by Ryan Frields, to accept the financial reports and to pay the monthly claims. **Unanimous.**

A special meeting of the Board was called for March 19, 2015, at 5:30 p.m. for action on the superintendent's contract.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Board will be held Monday, April 6, 2015, beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the conference room of the dorm building.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Gayle Munson, District Clerk

Approved April 6, 2015

  
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Sandra Muster, Chairman, Board of Trustees